

Video is the Killer App to Get Found in Google

By Larry Bodine

There is a "killer app" that will greatly improve the likelihood that potential clients will find you in a Google search. Research confirms that it is online video, and many lawyers have gotten the message.

Video is the No. 1 reason that people go online, according to Pew Internet Research. Clients and potential clients would rather watch to a two-minute verbal explanation than read a two-page article. "I don't want anything on paper. I don't have an in-box; if I did everything in it would go into trash. I want something that will catch my eye in 30 seconds or less, certainly not a long block of text. I'm more likely to look at a video," said MeMe Rasmussen, VP and Chief Privacy officer of Adobe Systems Inc.

Consider this:

More than 4 billion videos are viewed on YouTube every day

Video is the easiest way to a first-page ranking on Google. A website with video is 53 times more likely to be found on the first page of Google compared with a website without video, according to Forrester.

Statistics show that having a video on your law firm website increases the chances that a potential client will retain you, and increases the time a visitor spends on your website.

Therefore it is surprising that only 51% of lawyers in firms of 1-5 lawyers say they plan to use video in their online marketing, according to a LexisNexis/Vizibility survey of law firm use of social media. The lack of video on your law firm website is a marketing mistake.

"Lawyers should develop an introductory video that showcases their personality as well as expertise. Post the video on the Web, including YouTube. Our studies have shown that a well-produced video can be a primary factor in a consumer's decision to contact a firm," says my colleague Craig McGuire, Product Marketing Manager, Websites/SEO/SEM at LexisNexis.

A small firm that is harnessing video effectively is Tully Rinckey of Albany, New York. The firm's videos have been viewed more than 140,000 times - an outstanding result for a law firm. Many are clips from TV news reports in which a station interviewed a lawyer for comment about current events. Chief Marketing Officer Graig Cortelyou has cultivated good relations with local TV producers who give him these videos for free. The 33-lawyer firm also displays a video on its home page.

Tips for a good video

Recording a video is easy and can be done right in your office. An experienced videographer will have the camcorder, lights and lavalier microphones that are required. I recommend that you do not write a script and read it word-for-word from a teleprompter. All you need are a set of bullet points to follow, as you would use when making a presentation.

To create a video that generates new business, follow these tips:

Don't talk about yourself. Clients are more interested in their legal issue than your credentials. Instead, talk about the problems you solve for clients.

Keep your video short: 2-3 minutes tops. Any longer and you'll lose your viewers.

Get to the point in 8 seconds or else viewers will move on.

The more light the better. Do not rely on sunlight or office light, which will produce dark and off-color videos.

Move when you speak, because video is designed to capture action. Most lawyer videos show someone sitting at a desk, which is boring. Try standing up and gesturing when you speak, which is how you talk to people in person.

Mind the background. What is seen behind you makes a big difference. Do not sit in front of your office window or a lamp, which will put your face into a shadow. There should be no distracting cars or people moving in the background. Get rid of the clutter too.

One thing is clear: video is the future of law firm marketing. Adding video to your website is like getting an audition with a potential client. Don't delay in bringing your website up to date.